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I Guess We Are All Different After All: A Children's Book

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Introduction

As a Strategic and Organizational Communication major, I decided to pursue an honors project that was original and outside of the box. I chose to write a children's book, not only because of my love for children, but also because I believe that it is important for children to read because children's books are a primary vehicle for conveying important messages to children about important developmental topics and social expectations. I wanted to use my creativity and knowledge of children through experience and through my short time as a Physical Education major to create a project that allows me to mix all of my passions and education into one.

I had originally planned for the book to be about sports and encouraging kids to get up, go be active and live healthy lives, taking my readers on a fun adventure talking about different sports and getting kids excited about being active through participating in sports and living active lifestyles. But as I began re-reading children's books that I used to read as a child, to familiarize myself with the language, I realized that I still remembered what I had read all that time ago, and those life lessons stuck with me. At that point, I knew that the potential influence I had through this honors project children's book was much greater than I realized, and that my topic of influence needed to be more specific to our society than what I had originally planned. As I contemplated on what my new topic would be, I spent hours with my sister's Kindergarten students in her classroom and I began to realize how easily influenced children are. They are like sponges. Because of this, I decided to focus on the topic of diversity in the world and showcasing how differences are not a negative, but are a positive and should be celebrated and never looked down upon. The moral of the story is that yes, everyone has differences, but these differences are what make the world amazing and what makes the students unique.

For my honors project, I wrote and illustrated a K-2nd grade children's book entitled *I Guess We Are All Different After All*. The book follows a little boy named Travis and his transition as his family moves from Purpleville to Greenville. Travis and his parents come from a town where everyone has purple colored skin, and on Travis' first day at his new school in Greenville, he encounters something that he has never seen nor interacted with before, people with green colored skin. When Travis' teacher Miss Owen notices the confusion on all of her students faces, she explains to her class that differences are inevitable and amazing. Miss Owen points out how everyone has different colored hair, different size bodies, different hobbies, etc. and how these differences are not negative. Differences are what make the students unique and the students can use these differences to help each other and show love to one another.

The book is filled with scenarios that purposefully work to crush gender stereotypes. Boys are pictured with pink colored hair or wearing pink clothes, and girls with/wearing blue. Boys are seen to be enjoying hobbies like crafts while girls are seen to enjoy basketball and videogames. They are subtle, but they are meant to encourage children to do whatever they enjoy, regardless of what is common for a specific gender.

Using what I learned through the creation of my literature review, my process of writing came from Berthe Amoss' and Eric Suben's "Two R's and Two W's." My first step when beginning to write was to Read. I read countless numbers of best-selling children's books because doing so not only helped me to get a feeling for the tone of children's books, but it also helped me to see what kids like and what bookstores are selling. Next I went through and read the children's books that I liked as a child and remembered what I liked and what I didn't, what my interests were as a child, and what challenges I faced. Next I spent lots of time in my sister's classroom and observed her teaching and her students interacting with each other. Next I worked

on developing a theme, setting and characters. My theme was simple because I knew that I wanted to focus on diversity. My main setting is Greenville and Purpleville, and my characters are based off of my fiancé Travis and my sister Miss Owen. From there I finally began to write. I wrote out what I wanted to say, and then, recognizing my audience, I turned my thoughts into a language that was appropriate and easy to understand for young children.

Through my research of Jean Piaget's studies on growth and development of a child and through the actual writing process I learned how influential this book could be in shaping a child's view of diversity and differences and how it can help a child develop in their early childhood and later further into society. One consistent thing that I read when doing research of writing a children's book was to make sure that I wasn't preaching or clearly giving a life lesson through my writing. This was something that I struggled with in my writing because I had a lesson that I wanted to share, but I had to make it enjoyable and intriguing for a child to want to read. Taking something as crucial and complex as diversity and the way that the world looks at diversity and turning it into something that a child can connect with and understand while still getting the idea across was very challenging for me, but something that I feel I was successful in. Through learning this and struggling with it in my writing, I think this is a great lesson for any teacher or parent, to learn to arrange our words in a way that seems less like a lesson, and more like something that children are interested in hearing.

As I wrap up my project and put the final touches on my book, I am surprised with how well my illustrations turned out and how much I enjoyed creating the project. When I decided that I would be illustrating the book, I was nervous because although I like to draw, I am not at the level of creating a book, and although doing the illustrations myself consumed a lot of hours

of my life, it turned out to be a very relaxing activity for me and reminded me of how much I love to draw and be creative.

How to Write Children's Literature

In my process of discovering what my Honors Project would be, a children's book, I recognized that I had never written a children's book before, or attempted to relay new information to a child. With both of these things being required to write a child's book, I had to do some research in order to learn the ropes and create the greatest product that I can. In this literature review I will be using a few sources to find answers to the following questions that I need to complete my Honors Project; How do children learn and take in knowledge; how does one prepare to write a children's book, what will the formatting of this book look like and what does children's literature even consist of, how would I go about getting my future book published, and how I will use all of this information as I dive deeper into the completion of this project.

Children's Understanding and Development

For my research on learning how to effectively communicate with children through the way that they grow and develop, I turned to the textbook *Educational Psychology for Learning and Teaching: fifth edition*. I first started by looking at what cognitive development is. Cognitive Development is "concerned with our ability to think, to reason, and to understand and remember the world around us. It involves mental processes that are associated with talking in, organizing and making sense of information processes that include perceiving, attending to, understanding and recalling information. These mental functions are part of what is referred to as cognition" [77]. Jean Piaget is one of the most influential theorists in this area so I decided to study his work for further understanding. Piaget focused on "not just what children know, but also on how they represent and interact with the world, and how they organize that knowledge" [78]. Piaget studied how children come to know things and why this occurs. He says that

“changes in cognitive skills such as perceiving, understanding, remembering, problem solving and reasoning are influenced by the child’s experiences, both with objects and events in the physical world and through social interaction with peers, family, teachers and others. They are also influenced by their genetic or biological make-up, which determines the mental structures that shape and constrain thinking at different stages.

These factors interact with one another” [79].

Next, we will delve into what Piaget believed to be 4 main factors that influenced this development; Maturation, Activity, Social interaction, and Equilibration.

First, Maturation suggests that as a child’s brain matures, they are provided with means to reason in more advanced ways that they never have (Fischer 2008). This brain maturation occurs through children’s activity leading to strengthening of neural networks and the pruning of inefficient pathways. There has been a generous amount of research done on maturation that supports this notion that the brain’s maturation does advance a child’s thinking [79].

The second factor, Activity, suggests that when children are actively exploring the world, they are being mini scientists and are “learning by experimenting through physical and mental activity. Rather than passively receiving knowledge passed on from parents or teachers, the child actively constructs knowledge” [79]. Piaget, a constructivist (An explanation of learning that views it as a self-regulated process that builds on learners existing knowledge and in which learners are active participants), says that the constant process of exploring, gaining and organizing knowledge, and testing ideas on your own is central is the process of learning existing knowledge.

The third concept that Piaget believes happens to influence development is Social Interaction. This concept states that the interactions that children have with their parents, peers,

teachers, etc. all contribute to a child's experience with learning. A particular instance where social interaction is particularly important is when children are interacting with their peers. These are children who "think in similar ways and who have had similar experiences, but who have a slightly different perspective that challenges children's thinking and stimulates cognitive development. The resulting socio-cognitive conflict (that is, the conflict within the child as they try to fit together other's views that differ from their own) is one of the key processes in development" [80]. Children are more likely to challenge their peers, and also more likely to come to a conclusion and resolve the conflict in order to keep a friend (Philp & Duchesne, 2008).

The last concept in Equilibrium, which is concerned "with the way in which children respond to conflicts and inconsistencies between what they already know and what they experience in daily life" [80]. Piaget states that humans adapt to new experiences and knowledge with what they already know. In order for us to function properly, Piaget said that we need to have cognitive or mental balance, just like our physical bodies need to be in balance. He said "When we encounter objects or events that are unfamiliar, our cognitive balance is upset. We become confused and uncertain about how to think or act" [80]. Equilibration is the process of seeking to restore the balance between what is familiar and known in the child's existing cognitive system- and new information or the external world (Siegler, 1998). How do we restore the balance? Through assimilation and accommodation, which are the "the two processes involved in adaptation. Assimilation refers to the adjustment of an existing schema to fit a new experience. In accommodation, new information is used to establish a new model or schema" [80]. Children, and even adults, are always using experiences to build on and organize their existing knowledge. When we learn and grow mentally, "Experience leads to changes in thinking as we fit new knowledge into existing schemas, and add new schemas to allow for the new

knowledge” [81]. The tricky part of adaptation is the concepts of readiness and closeness of the match. Piaget says

“In teaching anything to a child, the new material must be close enough to what is already known by the child in order for a link to be made between old and new. If such a link is made, the process of either assimilation or accommodation can begin. The term ‘readiness’ is used to describe a child who has the prior knowledge or experiences needed to make a link between the known and the unknown. The Phrase ‘closeness of the match’ refers to the relative distance, in terms of the child’s experience and understanding, between what is already known and new information” [82].

While Piaget believed that learning and development came from both the outside world and through genetics, Lev Samanovich Vygotsky, a contemporary of Piaget’s, believed what is called a Sociocultural Theory which states that “Learning happens from the outside in. Ways of thinking and acting are first acquired through social interaction and then gradually internalized, or processed silently in the mind, so that learning proceeds from the outside in” [111]. Although there are two different views of how children learn and develop, a constant hold true for both theorists that the outside world has a major influence on how children grow and develop mentally.

Now that we know what can contribute to a child’s development, we need to know what a child is going through and experiencing specifically during early childhood (from three years until 7 years). A child going through early childhood is developing its fine motor skills, “movement skills using large muscle groups,” and gross motor skills, “movement skills using small muscle groups” [27]. Their bodies are developing “longer arms and legs and greater muscle control contributing to smoother, more coordinated movement,” their brains are

developing “Myelination which leads to improved coordination of various regions of the brain, which is necessary for motor control,” and their behavior “consists of constant activity which contributes to skill and muscle development” [32]. What someone could do for the child going through this time in their life is “provide opportunities for practicing fine motor skills, such as... climbing, running, jumping, throwing and kicking balls” [32]. They are now able to intentionally control and combine movements (Adolph & Berger, 2010).

In addition to bodily development, the brain is seeing rapid development during early childhood which allows for the child to have greater control. *Educational Psychology for Learning and Teaching: fifth edition* says that “In particular, a growth spurt in the frontal region of the brain corresponds to the development of executive function skills, such as the ability to follow rules and directions and control impulses” [41]. Most children three years of age are able to complete tasks that have them following 2 rules at the same time and by the age of 5, children can move their attention from one rule to another to accommodate a situation. Although child can “inhibit and control some impulses, allowing them to complete more complex tasks and follow instructions from caregivers, they still need a lot of practice, positive experience and support from adults to reinforce these new skills in the brain.

Language is how we communicate and express our feelings and desires, how we can achieve our goals and create relationships with others. According to *Educational Psychology for Learning and Teaching: fifth edition*, the development of language in children is “influenced by cognitive, social and emotional development. Unlike physical development, language development does not occur without social interaction or the child’s interaction with the environment” [45]. Children start to speak between two and three years old and then develops more and more as time goes on with the emergence and understanding of grammar (Maratsos

1998). A child's ability to understand grammar "has been linked to children's ability to find patterns and form categories. As children begin to form more complex sentences by joining phrases together, another sequence is evident that appears to parallel cognitive development" joining words leads to children learning "in similar ways about concepts; first that things can be grouped together (and), then that they can be sequenced (then), and finally that relationships may be causal (because)" [47]. We are reminded that this same sequence is seen in children's stories and in their understanding of stories (Bloom, 1998). Now that we have done some research on how children learn in stages of their life, let's look at how to write a children's book.

Preparation

Before one can even start to think about the writing process or the final, a clear understanding of rhetoric. The term Rhetoric has been defined in many different ways by many different people, but a general understanding of rhetoric is the use of any kind of language (words, music, dance, sports, painting, poetry, non-verbal's, etc.) to form attitudes and influence action (Herrick, 6). Rhetoric is our ability to understand when to use Ethos, Pathos, or Logos which are different ways in appealing to your audience. The concept of Rhetoric is important to know because it shapes the way we present information and communicate with our targeted audience. Style and audience will be explained deeper in future sections, but for now, let's shift our attention on how to begin the process of writing children's literature.

The book "Writing and Illustrating Children's books for Publication" by Berthe Amoss and Eric Suben was my main source in my search to discover how I can prepare to write a children's book and what this book would need to consist of. The first step that are some things that I should be do continuously throughout my process of writing the book is known as The Fundamentals: "Two R's and Two W's". The first "R" is to Read. I am to "Spend time in

bookstores and libraries. Go through... any children's bookshelves. Constant exposure to the vast range of material published for children can help you appreciate the wide variety of opportunities and possibilities in writing for children. It can also help you learn what is publishable" [9]. The benefit of doing this is so that I can see reactions of children and parents to the books and observe what children and parents like and dislike. This source says to "talk to the bookseller; most will be happy to share their observations with you. You can hear something about the reasons parents buy particular books. And you can see how books are merchandised, formatted, illustrated, positioned on shelves or in displays, hand sold by bookstore personnel" [9]. When writing my book, I need to keep in mind what bookstores want because at the end of the day you are selling your book to a bookstore. Once you sell the book to the publisher, they are selling it to a bookstore and "the bookseller is the first consumer of your book" [9].

The next "R" is Remember, because remember what I liked as a child and to put myself in the shoes of my consumer, a child, will spark ideas and make my story ten times more enjoyable. I need to think back from my childhood and remember "the stories and books [I] liked best, the questions [I] wondered about most, the people, places, things, and experiences [I] liked best and least, and why... [My] memory should become [my] greatest source of inspiration, not only for story ideas, but also for true feeling to express in [my] writing" [9]. What were my interests as a child and why? Remembering these things and getting into the brain of my consumer will help to make my story all the more interesting and successfully communicable. [10]

The first "W" is Watch. This consists of watching, overseeing and noting things that children do that intrigue you and stand out. Some things to watch for are "their ages and the interests and skills they have developed. What are their motor skills" [10]? Talking to parents

and teachers can help add to the information that I have about children. Just ask questions like “What curriculum is your child learning this year? What skills does the teacher expect the children to master?” [10] and then work those responses and concepts into my story. One more addition thing to watch would be children’s television and movies. Amoss and Suben say that “They can help you understand children’s interests. They can instruct you in ways of expressing meaningful themes through colorful character and action” [10].

The final fundamental and the final “W” is Write because “The most important thing you can do is write” [11]. Something that was heavily emphasized in this section was the concept of keeping a journal. Keeping a journal is important because it is “Put[ting] your memories into words. Writing is like any other skill, requiring constant exercise to improve” [10]. Writing is this journal should be a consistent and every day event. The entire idea of the last “W” is that even

“When you are not working on a manuscript, keep a written record of your thoughts, feelings, and observations that apply to children and children’s books. If you are working on a manuscript, do some writing on it every day- even a sentence or two can be constructive. The most important thing you can do in working on a story is to keep the ball rolling, to stay in the world of your story with the characters you’ve created... A story is a living growing thing: You are bringing the characters and situation to life through your words. Like other living things, your story requires attention and care” [11].

Now that I understood what I should be doing in preparation of the book, I needed to start looking at what the format of this book will look like and what the book will consist of.

Content

When talking about the content of a book, first you need to figure out what category book that you will be writing. The book, *Writing and Illustrating Children's Books for Publication*, lays out 3 different categories that one could choose from. The first was a "Picture book" which is "a book for very young children in which the illustrations play a role as important as the text; for children approximately two to six" [13]. Pictures are a type of Rhetoric, and they contribute to the understanding of a story, to children and even to an adult. In the article, "Children's Literature in Education," Lawrence R. Sipe, describes the picture text relationship with the word synergy. The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines synergy as "the production of two or more agents, substances, etc., of a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects" [98]. Sipe says that in a picture book, both the text and the illustration would be incomplete without the other. Their relationship effects the end result and the reader's comprehension of the work (Sipe, 1998). Sipe was interested in what happens in our heads when we relate the verbal and visual texts of the book to each other. His findings were textual meaning, co-creation as the reader acts by supplying what is not written but implied by the images, and gap-filling. Gap-filling is a major indication that illustrations are a huge piece of rhetoric. Readers are "filling in some of the gaps in the verbal text of a picture book with information from the illustrations and of readers using information from the verbal text to fill in some of the gaps in the illustrations" [99].

The second option was a "Chapter book" which is "a longer book for older children who are learning or have just learned to read, with more sophisticated subject matter, treatment, and language; for children approximately six to ten" [13]. And lastly is what is called a "Young Adult novel" or YA which has two distinct subcategories within it, "one for ten to 12 year olds and another for ages 12 and older which contains more mature subject matter and language

suitable for young teens” [13]. After this decision has been made, the next step, is to plan ahead. According to *Writing and Illustrating Children’s Books for Publication*, “Early in the process of writing your story, [will be to] make important decisions about the length, tone, and theme of your book, as well as the need for illustrations whether your characters will be animal or human.”

The content of the book will consist of a theme, setting, and characters. The theme of your story “should be below the surface of every event in the story” [25]. Amoss and Suben make sure to clarify that “The theme is different from the idea of your book” [25]. This is better explained with the example that they used for a book about baby dinosaurs. It says

“Your idea may be to write a book about baby dinosaurs. But your theme will be showing that, though they started out small, these dinosaurs grew big and strong and were soon able to fend for themselves... Everything that happens must in some way illustrate this basic message, this universal element that children can relate to and take away with them as an opportunity for growth... Your theme should be illustrated by the events that happen in your book, not prosaically told in so many words” [25].

The theme should be conspicuously apart of everything in your book. The setting is similar to the theme in the same way that everything about the setting should reflect the theme, characters and plot. The story should be set “in a time that interests you, one that you’ve lived and know – or if it’s in the past, one you’d enjoy researching” [31]. This hold true for every category of book, no matter the age of the audience. If the book that you are writing “is a picture book for very young children, make sure your setting is one you understand and feel comfortable in from the point of view of the child within” [31].

Characters are what children feel a connection to and identify with. This is what hooks them to the story, and just like the theme and the setting, characters need to be consistent.

Characters need to match the setting so

“If your book has a contemporary setting, your characters must act and think as today’s children do. That’s not as easy as it sounds. Each generation has a language, even a culture of its own, and whereas human nature doesn’t change, customs and morals do. And even if you are a younger writer, the manner and customs of a ten-year-old have changed since you were a child” [33].

Again, this is why watching and observing children is so helpful. As helpful as observation can be, we can’t forget about the child within ourselves and remembering the way we used to feel and act as a child. It’s sad that these changes occur and things aren’t the same as they were when we were kids, but we have to be aware and keep up to date on them so that we can speak to today’s young people. [33] Because these characters are what children connect with, they need to be “real.” Take time to develop your characters and “If you can make them believable to yourself, they will be real to your readers” [33]. But what makes a character seem “real” is that they will never act “out of character.” These characters can’t be manipulated to behave in a way that they wouldn’t do in real life. Taking the time to develop these characters is worth it because “‘Real’ characters will plot your book for you, almost as though they are telling you their story. This may sound like an exaggeration, but it’s true and it works” [33]. I will be writing my book with the goal in mind of breaking gender stereotypes. In an article written by Carole M. Kortenhuis and Jack Demarest called “Gender Role Stereotyping in Children’s Literature: An Update” out of Mommouth College talks about the impact of gender role stereotyping of characters in children’s literature. The two authors express that

“In children’s literature, males typically are portrayed as competent and achievement oriented, while the image of females is that they are limited in what they do, and less competent in their ability to accomplish things. Female characters are involved in few of the activities and assigned few of the characteristics or goals that are accorded prestige and esteem in our society, even though such goals and activities are pursued and achieved daily by a majority of women... girls must identify with the male figures in these stories if they are to acquire any sense of competence or achievements from the literary role models” [221].

In concluding the content section, a big part of planning these major decisions is knowing who your audience is. If it is little children,

“Remember that small children tend to be literal-minded, partly because they don’t have a wealth of associations for each new idea that comes along. Don’t overwhelm picture book readers with too much to digest. Visualize your characters and visualize a reader who is like them. Can they read? Can they write? Do they go to school? What grade? Is their focus home, or is it outside the home? Decide what kind of book you’re writing by whom you see in your mind’s eye” [28].

When writing a picture book, it can help if you think of this genre as poetry because “your text must be shorter like a poem to accommodate a very young child’s short attention span. Each word of a poem or picture book is important to express as clearly and as rightly as possible your idea” [46]. Because you have to choose words and illustrations wisely, you are forced to choose words carefully and eliminate words that are unnecessary. In order for children of young age to comprehend what is trying to be expressed, “like a poem, there should be only one simple idea, and every word must contribute to expressing that idea” [46].

Book Formatting

Now that we know what content is supposed to be presented in a book, what does the formatting of a picture book look like? According to Amoss and Suben ““Picture books can be softcover or hardcover; big or small; printed on cardboard or plastic; cut into shapes, or packaged with dolls” [26]. Creativity is encouraged, but we must make sure that the theme of the book reflects the format. If you are writing a book about making friends and “A book shaped like a yellow school bus may sound like a fun idea, but do two-year-olds ride a yellow school bus? Format and age group are closely linked” [26]. When thinking about the size of the book,

“consider the average size of a bookshelf, approximately ten inches deep and 12 inches high. Most publishers encourage a book size that will easily fit on a library shelf with the spine facing out and discourage wide diversion, such as long, skinny shapes that would stick out from a shelf, very small sizes that would easily get lost behind other books; or tall books that would have to be placed on a shelf by turning the book on its side” [57].

This book encourages making what is called a book dummy. A book dummy is a dummy of a picture book, and it “can include simple black and white line drawings or just verbal descriptions of what the pictures should show” [24]. We do this because each page of a picture book will have a picture and we like to get our vision out before sending it to publishers.

When writing a picture book, one should plan and prepare to have 32 pages. These books are “sometimes 24 pages long, but more often they contain 32 pages. All pages count in books are usually multiples of 16” [24]. This 32-page length requirement means “that the illustrator has the back and front of 16 pages to use, and those pages will include the half-title page, title pages (usually a double page), and another page for publisher’s information and CIP (Cataloging-In-Publications) data” [57]. The way a book is printed is

“all on one big sheet of paper; eight pages are printed on one side of the sheet, eight on the other. The sheet is then folded and cut. These 16-page groupings, called signatures, are then gathered and bound to form the book. You need to know this information about page counts because you need to plan and present your book in a manner that is realistic from the manufacturing and marketing point of view” [24].

Now there are books for really young children that are soft and plush, but once you get “Past age three or four, the standard 32-page picture book will be the norm” [26]. Finally, when trying to plan formatting and create content for your story remember that your first draft is not set in cement, just get your ideas down on paper “and the you can fine-tune it, withholding information to create suspense, deleting parts that don’t move your story along. You are very likely to get an idea when you are close to the end and you will have to change a large part of your story. If the change improves your story, make it” [35]

Publication

When the book is complete, then the next stage, sending off your book and submitting a manuscript, of the process begins. The first step is figuring out who will like your book and where to send it to. Unfortunately, nowadays,

“knowing where to send your manuscript is harder than ever. Many publishers publicize that they do not read unsolicited submissions, or submissions from authors unrepresented by agents, or manuscripts in certain genres. Persistent writers can still break down these barriers. But the barriers seem higher and more forbidding than ever” [67].

Communicating with others about what you are doing and what your plans are for your book can help spread the work and network for potential homes for your work. Another great way to figure out where to send your work is going to bookstores or libraries and looking for books

similar to the one you wrote. When you have found some “note down the publisher’s names. Then look online at the publisher’s websites or call and request copies of their submission policies” [68]. When reviewing these policies, you will notice that some of them require query letters before you are able to submit your book. A query letter “describes your story, its intended audience its theme and format. It also introduces you and your special background to the editor” [71]. This letter should suggest the “flavor” of your book, describe your idea, summarize the plot, emphasize the theme, define the genre, format and age group and describe yourself and your actual experience with children [71]. If this letter piques the interest of an editor, they will ask you to send your manuscript, and when it comes time to send you book to publishing companies a good thing to know is that

“Each formerly independent company operates as an imprint of the larger company... So, in Penguin Putnam, for instance, there are Viking children’s books and Grosset & Dunlap children’s books. Though part of the same company, each imprint retains a unique identity as well as a separate editorial staff. To some extent, the exercise for the aspiring writer remains the same: identifying imprints that seem most likely to publish books like the one you want to submit. Be warned, however, that all the imprints may report to the same corporate publishing board, the group of decision-makers who choose what gets published. Thus, if you submit a manuscript to Viking that gets rejected by the board, resubmitting it to Grosset & Dunlap only means that the board will recognize a work they already jettisoned. Most likely, they may have the same response again. On the plus side, the board members may reject a story for the Viking list but ask the Grosset & Dunlap editors to consider it for inclusion of their list” [67].

Finally, the submission process may take a while because publishers like to control how long they hold manuscripts before responding to you. Before following up give the publisher about 6 weeks. A sure way to get a speedy rejection, regardless of how great your work is, is to be angry or threatening when you do follow up. A way to relieve the stress of whether or not the Publisher received the manuscript is to provide a self-addressed and stamped post card with your manuscript which states “We have received your manuscript and will be back in touch after we have completed our review” and leave a space for the editor to sign their name [74].

Application

In conclusion, all of this information is going to shape the way that I create my book, one because I had no idea how to write a children’s book before this and now I know what process to follow, what things to include, and what steps to go about if I wanted to get the book published, and two I know how to speak to my audience and what things to look out for when formulating my content. Through Paget’s work I can see that my book could be part of what shapes a child’s view of something and part of what helps the child develop further into society and through my study how children develop during early childhood I can see that a book about diversity and inclusion is the perfect topic for children during this stage are developing and becoming a conscious part of society.

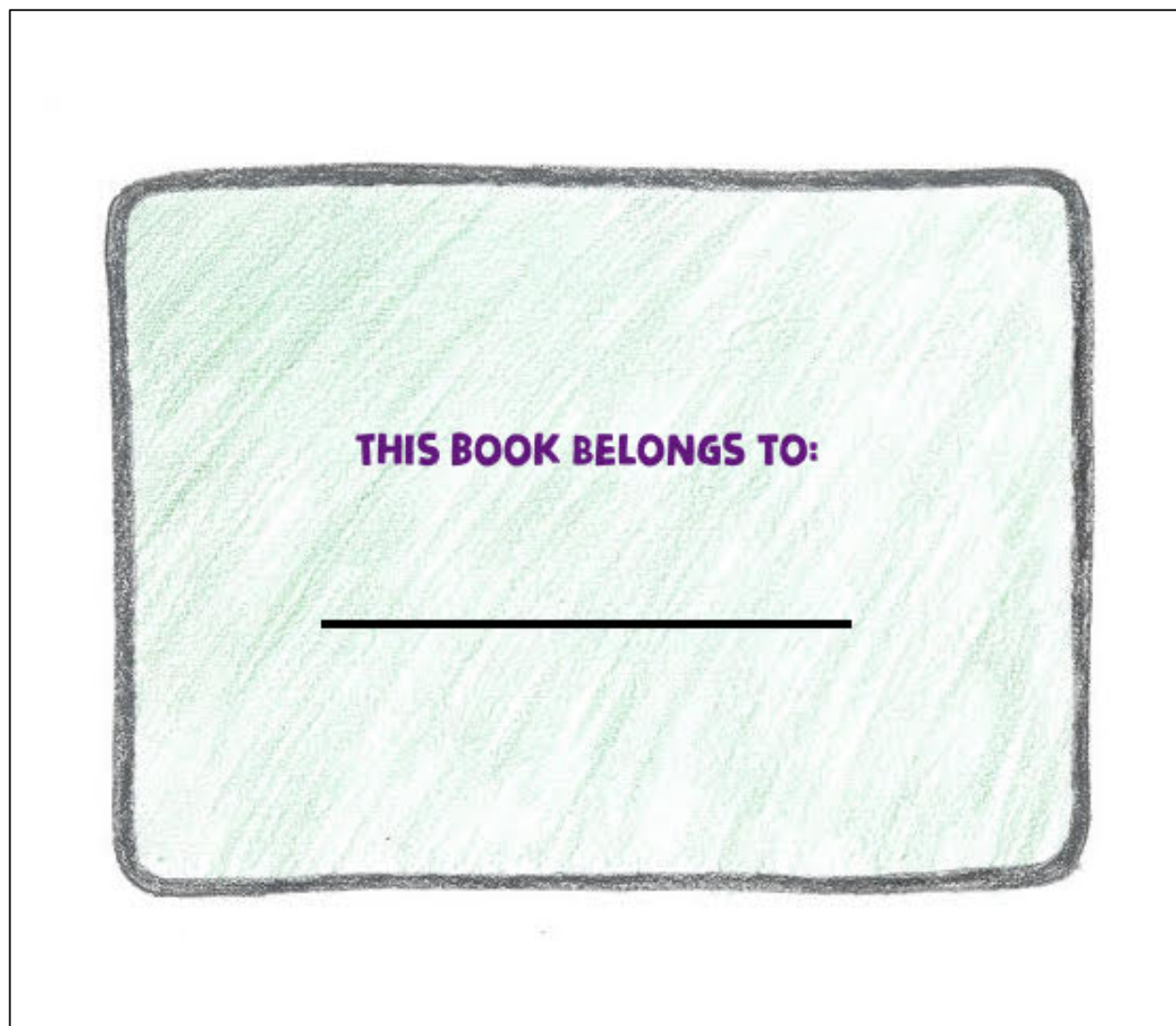
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I GUESS WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT AFTER ALL

ANGELICA OWEN







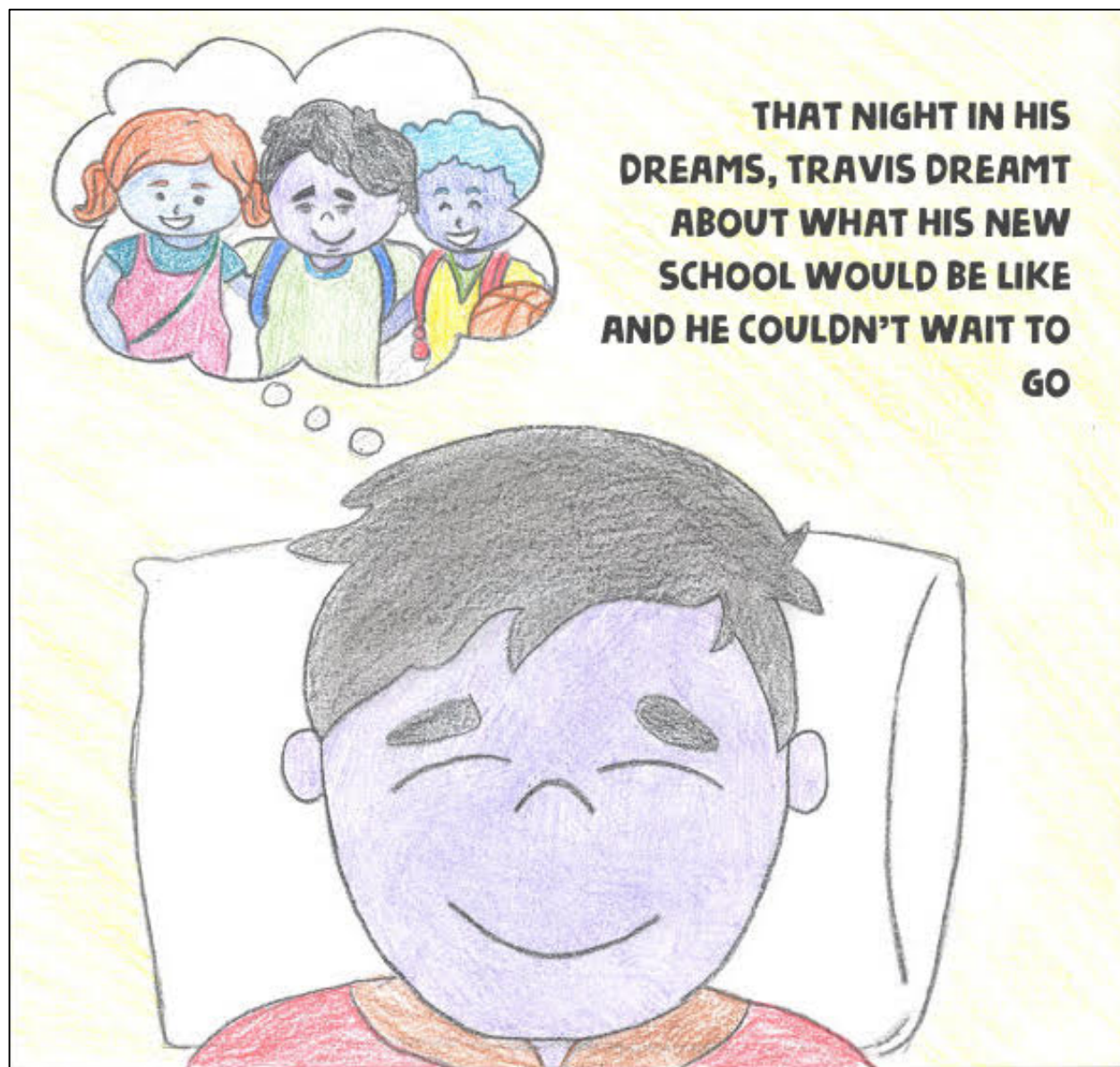


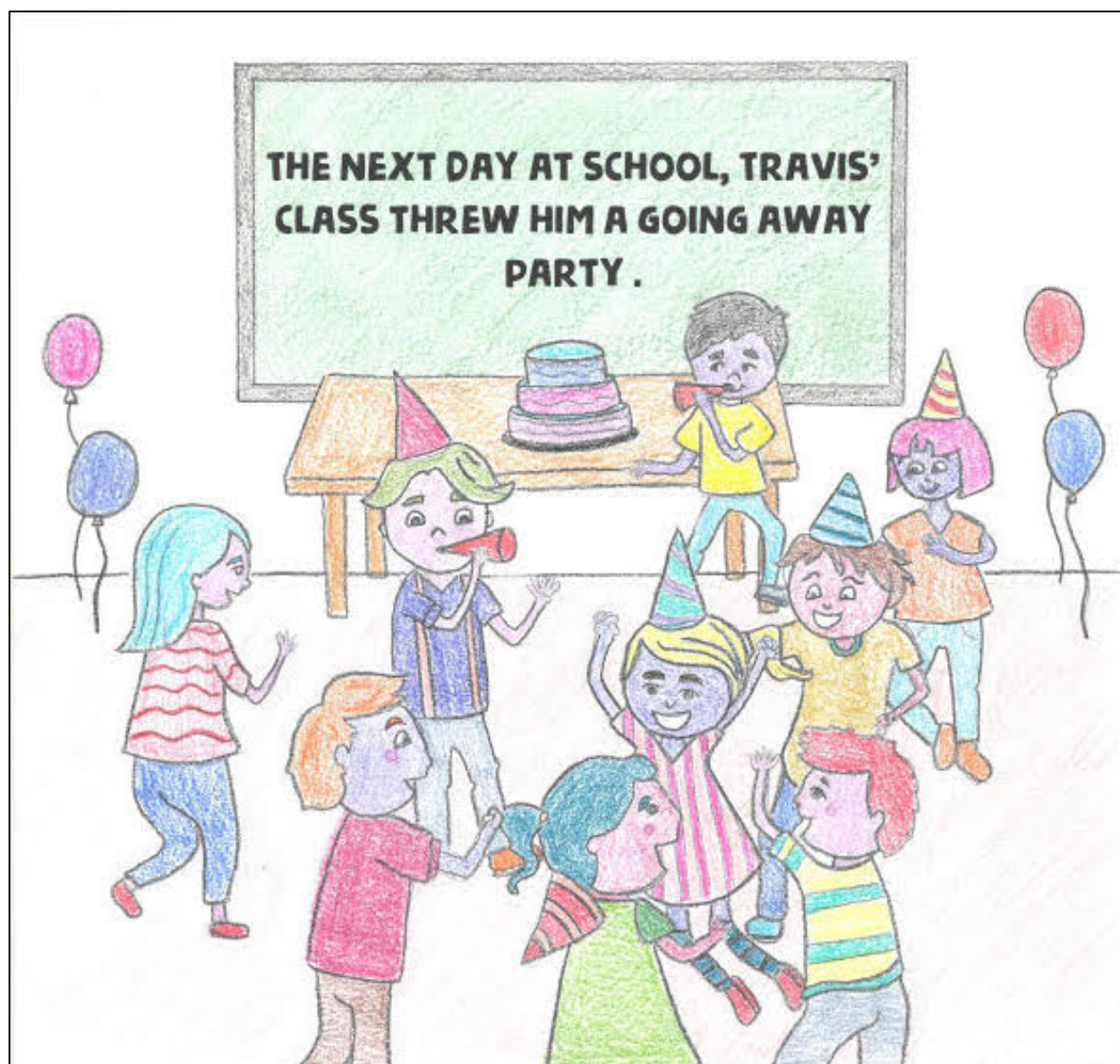
**“TRAVIS, WE HAVE SOMETHING
EXCITING TO TELL YOU!”
“WE’RE MOVING!”
“YOUR MOM GOT A NEW JOB AND IT’S
TAKING OUR FAMILY TO GREENVILLE.”**

**“HOW FUN! CAN I START PACKING
NOW?”**

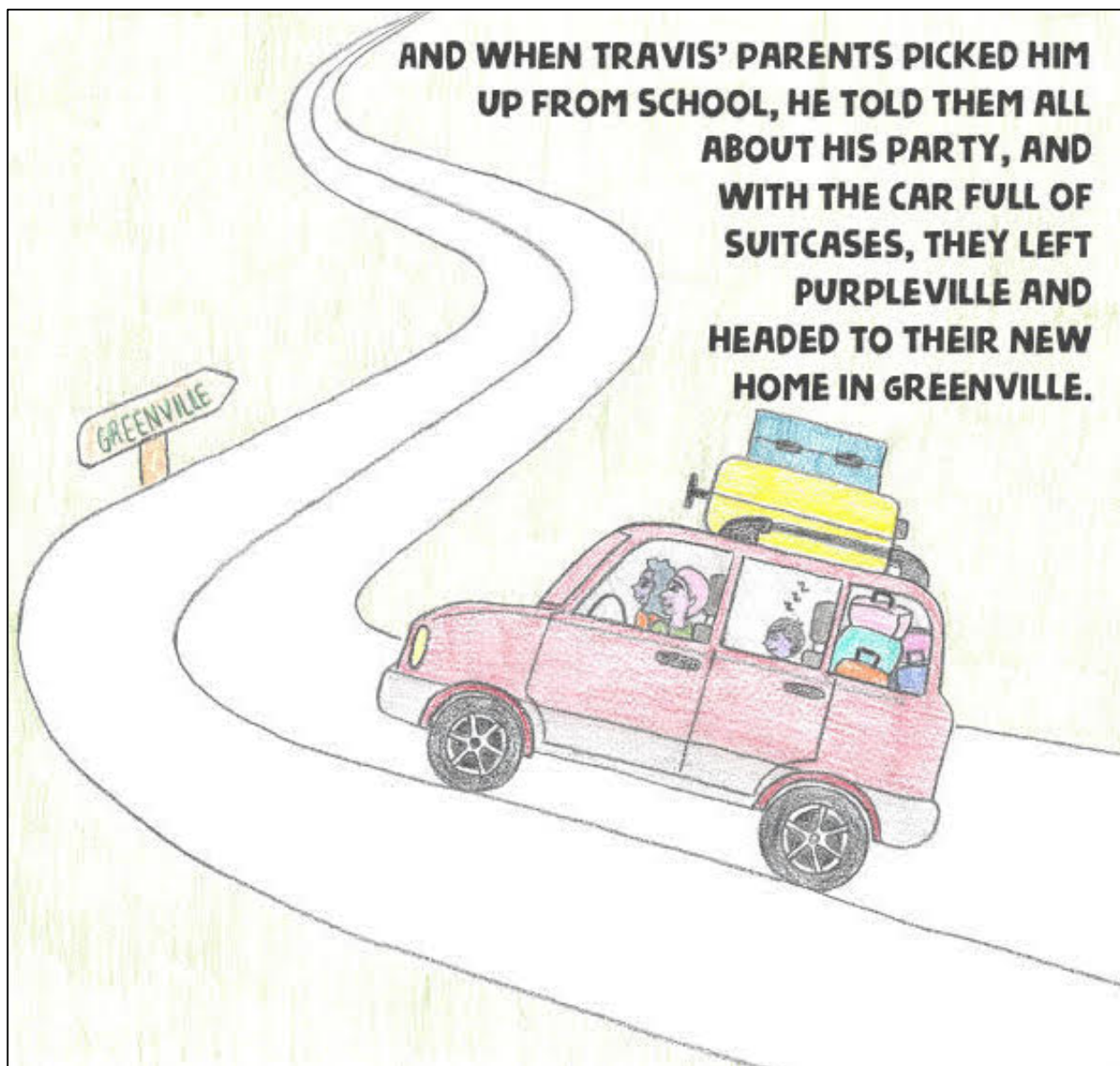
**“NOT NOW, SON. GOT TO SLEEP
BECAUSE TOMORROW IS A BIG DAY.
YOU WILL GET TO SAY GOODBYE TO
ALL OF YOUR FRIENDS AT SCHOOL.”**

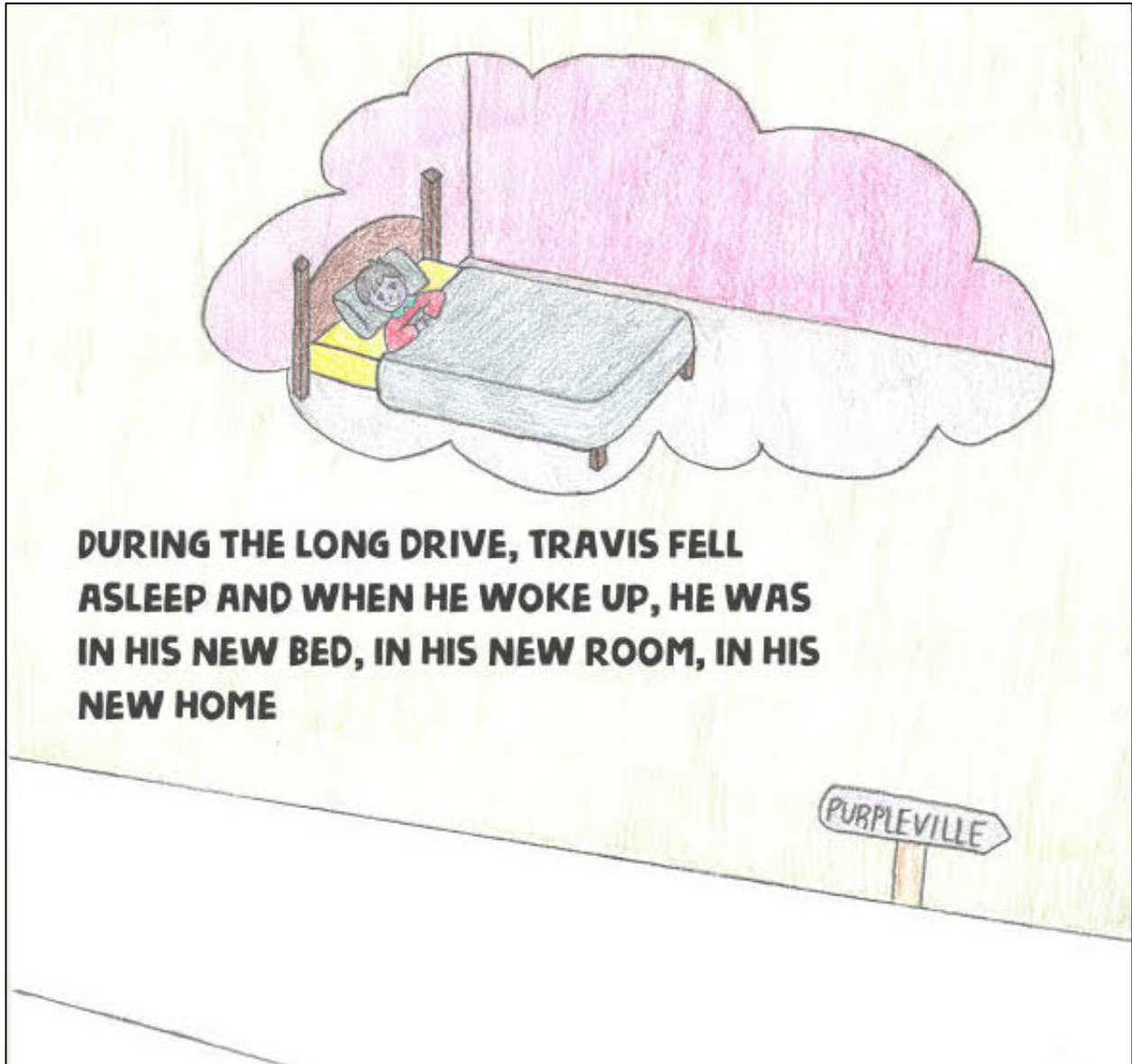






**AND WHEN TRAVIS' PARENTS PICKED HIM
UP FROM SCHOOL, HE TOLD THEM ALL
ABOUT HIS PARTY, AND
WITH THE CAR FULL OF
SUITCASES, THEY LEFT
PURPLEVILLE AND
HEADED TO THEIR NEW
HOME IN GREENVILLE.**





**DURING THE LONG DRIVE, TRAVIS FELL
ASLEEP AND WHEN HE WOKE UP, HE WAS
IN HIS NEW BED, IN HIS NEW ROOM, IN HIS
NEW HOME**

**DURING DINNER THAT NIGHT,
TRAVIS' MOM SAID "DON'T FORGET
TO BE KIND TO ALL OF THE NEW
FRIENDS THAT YOU MEET AND TO BE
POLITE, SAY PLEASE AND THANK
YOU, AND USE MANNERS WITH
ADULTS AND FRIENDS."**



**AND BEFORE BED, TRAVIS' MOM REMINDED
HIM HOW SPECIAL HE WAS AND HOW MUCH
SHE LOVED HIM.**

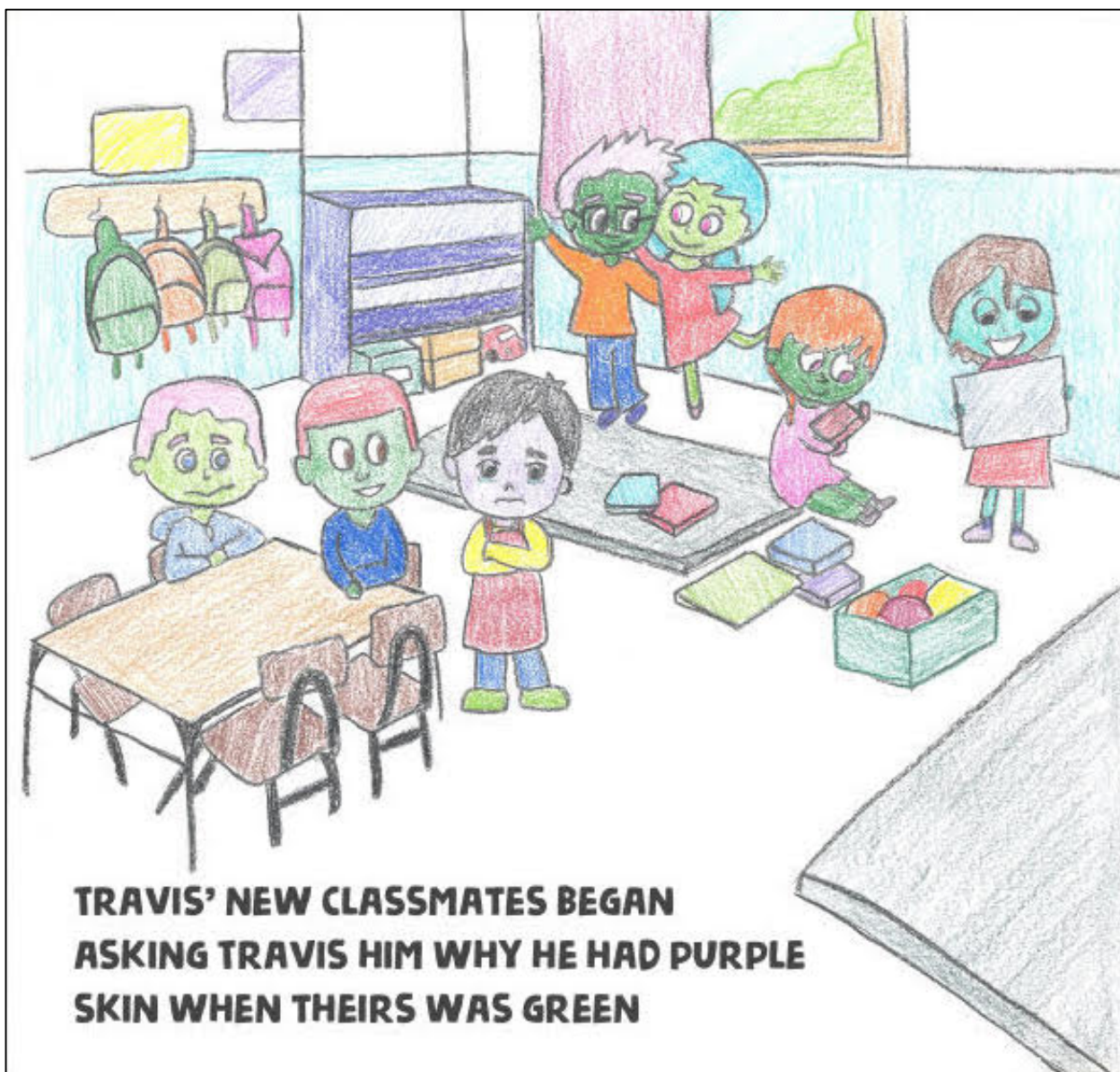


THE NEXT DAY, WHEN TRAVIS ARRIVED AT HIS NEW SCHOOL, HE NOTICED THAT HIS NEW CLASSMATES AND TEACHER, MISS OWEN, HAD A DIFFERENT COLOR SKIN THAN HE DID, AND HIS CLASSMATES NOTICED THE DIFFERENCE TOO.



**TRAVIS HAD NEVER SEEN ANYONE WITH GREEN
COLORED SKIN BEFORE AND AS HE LOOKED
AROUND AND SAW THAT HE WAS THE ONLY ONE
WITH PURPLE SKIN, HE FELT LONELY AND
CONFUSED.**





**TRAVIS' NEW CLASSMATES BEGAN
ASKING TRAVIS HIM WHY HE HAD PURPLE
SKIN WHEN THEIRS WAS GREEN**

**AND AS MISS OWEN BEGAN TO HEAR HER
CONFUSED STUDENTS, AND SAW HOW TRAVIS
WAS FEELING, SHE GOT THE ATTENTION OF THE
CLASS.**



**“JUST BECAUSE TRAVIS
HAS PURPLE SKIN,
DOESN'T MAKE HIM ANY
DIFFERENT THAN US. WE
ARE ALL DIFFERENT!”**



**“SOME OF US HAVE DARK GREEN SKIN, SOME OF
US HAVE LIGHT GREEN SKIN. SOME OF US HAVE
YELLOW GREEN SKIN, AND SOME OF US HAVE
BLUE GREEN SKIN.”**



**“WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT HAIR. SOME OF US
HAVE LONG HAIR, AND SOME OF US HAVE
SHORT HAIR.”**



**SOME OF US HAVE PURPLE HAIR, AND SOME OF
US HAVE PINK HAIR. SOME OF US HAVE
ORANGE HAIR, AND SOME OF US HAVE YELLOW
HAIR.”**



**“SOME OF US WEAR GLASSES, AND SOME OF
US DON’T.”**



“WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT SIZE NOSES. SOME OF US HAVE SMALL NOSES, AND SOME OF US HAVE LONG NOSES. SOME OF US HAVE ROUND NOSES, AND SOME OF US HAVE NARROW NOSES.”



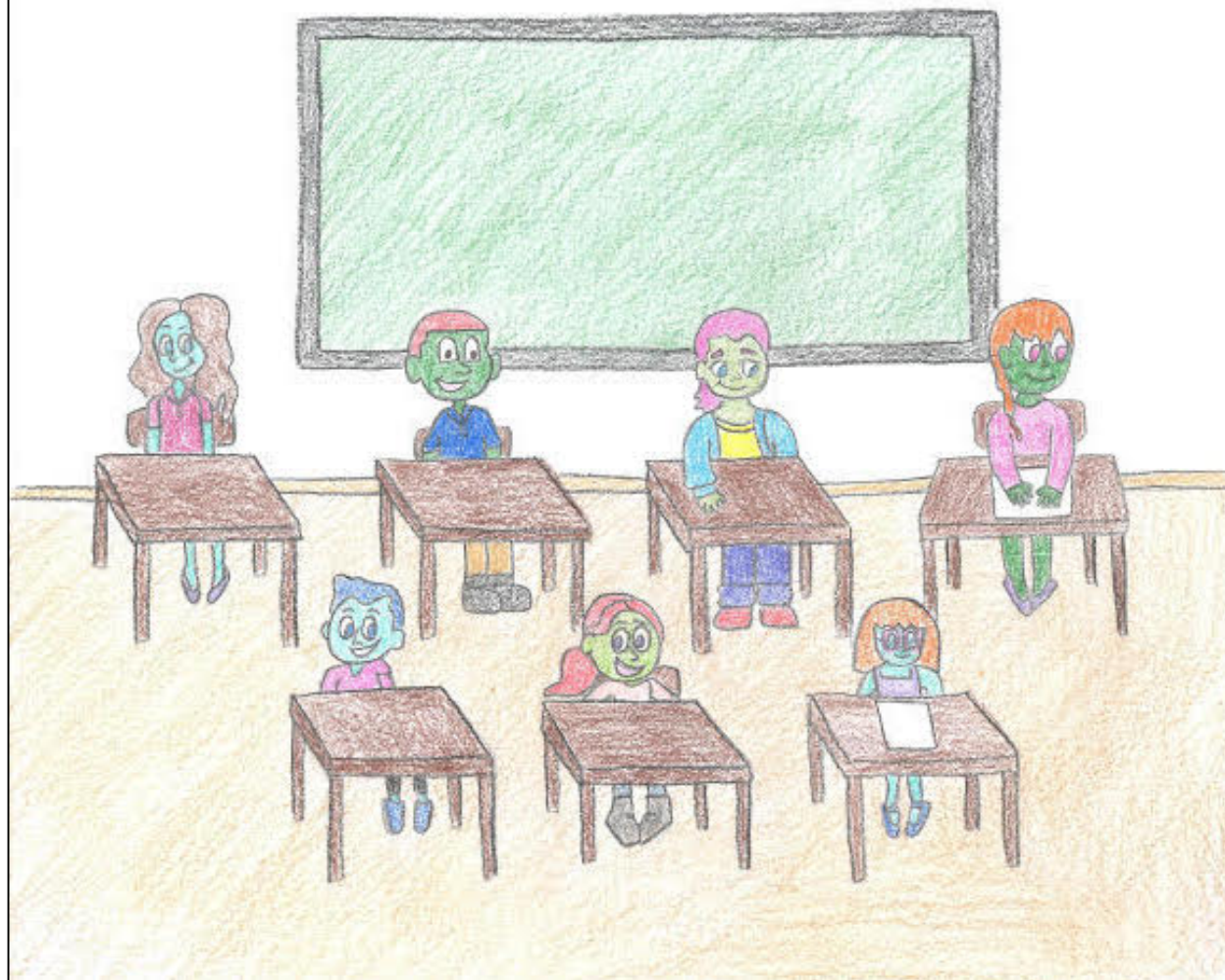
**“SOME OF US ARE TALL, SOME SHORT. SOME OF
US ARE BIG AND SOME ARE SMALL.”**



“WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT HOBBIES AND THINGS WE LIKE TO DO. SOME OF US PLAY TENNIS, OTHERS LIKE BASKETBALL. SOME OF US LIKE DOING CRAFTS, SOME OF US LIKE PLAYING WITH DOLLS, AND SOME OF US LIKE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES.



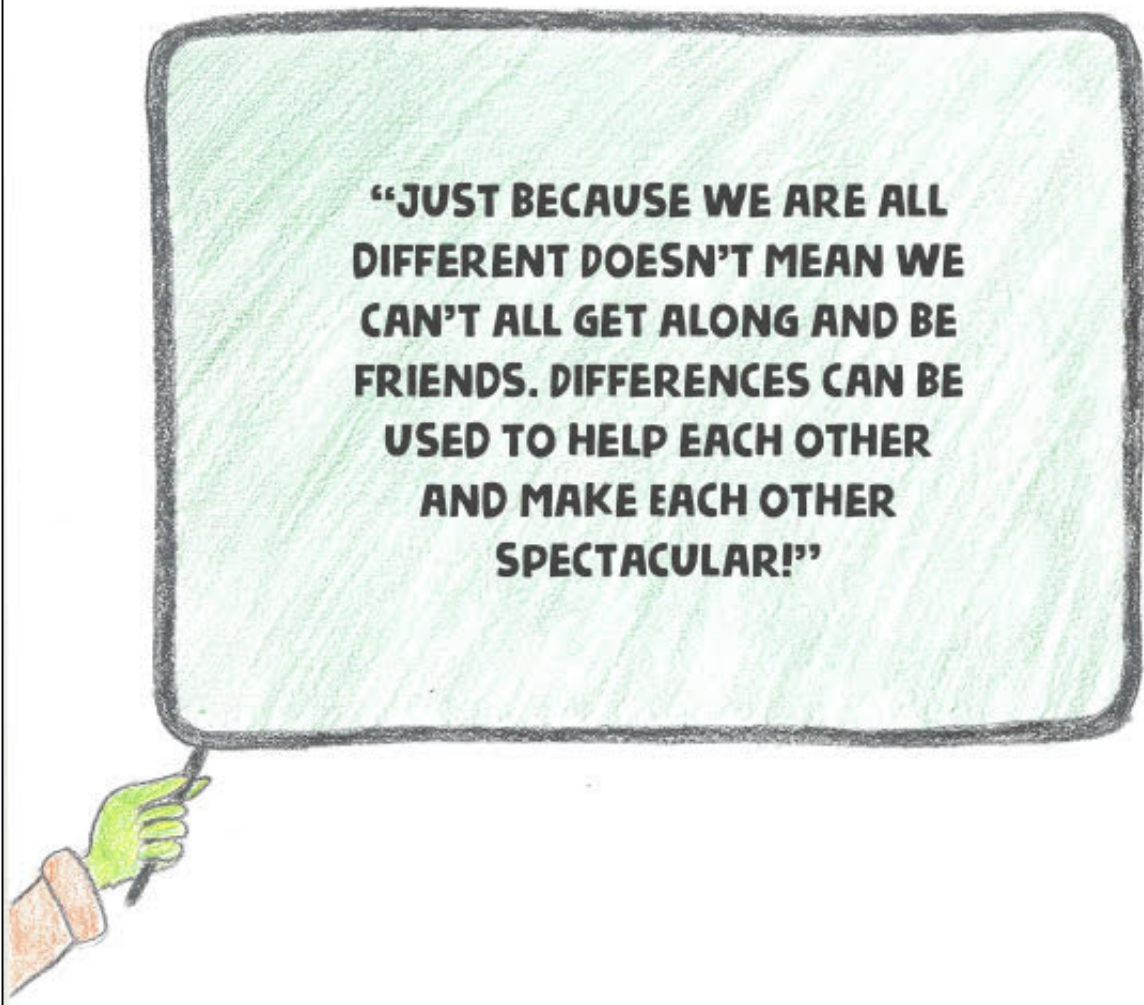
“DON'T YOU SEE? WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT!”



**“DIFFERENCES ARE AMAZING AND BEAUTIFUL. THEY
MAKE US ALL SPECIAL AND EVEN MORE LOVABLE AND
VALUABLE.”**





A hand with a green glove and an orange sleeve is holding a green sign with a black border. The sign contains the following text:

**“JUST BECAUSE WE ARE ALL
DIFFERENT DOESN’T MEAN WE
CAN’T ALL GET ALONG AND BE
FRIENDS. DIFFERENCES CAN BE
USED TO HELP EACH OTHER
AND MAKE EACH OTHER
SPECTACULAR!”**

**AND WHEN TRAVIS LOOKED AROUND, HE BEGAN
TO SMILE BECAUSE HE FELT LESS ALONE.**



AND AT THE END OF A GREAT FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, TRAVIS AND HIS CLASSMATES SAW THAT THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS THAT "SOME OF US ARE SHORT, AND SOME OF US ARE TALL, SO I GUESS WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT AFTER ALL."



Companion to “I Guess We Are All Different After All”

After the completion of the book *I Guess We Are All Different After All*, I began to reflect on why I chose to write a children’s book, about this specific topic of diversity, and what I hope children get out of this book through not only reading it, but through the potential discussion with parents and teachers after reading. This final paper, concluding my honors project, is directed towards parents and teachers with the goal of furthering the conversation and creating discussions with their students and children about diversity and learning to celebrate differences at a young age.

The more and more that we are around children, the more that we can see how impressionable they are and how easily they can be shaped into what their environment is portraying to them. As parents and teachers, we have a responsibility to instill respect for others in our children starting at a young age. In our culture today everywhere you look there will always be someone that looks different or acts different from the way our children experienced growing up and are comfortable with. Rachel Berman, a graduate program director of the school of Early Childhood Studies at Ryerson University in Toronto said “They’re never too young, and an ongoing dialogue about race and racism is a really good idea... Read them picture books and show them TV shows and movies that celebrate kids of all cultures and religions, but include examples of these kids doing everyday things so that they won’t see difference as exotic” (Mlynek, 2017) In order to normalize differences and steer away from forced conformity, parents and teachers must begin to normalize, depict, and celebrate racial, ethnic, and physical differences from a young age.

My vision for the book is that when children read it, they will be influenced by the words and Travis’ experience and begin to not only see and treat others with more respect, but also

begin to feel better about the differences within themselves. Through the creation of this book, I intended to take a complex discussion of diversity and respect and turn it into a situation in which a young child can relate to and begin to understand and think about. The vision for the book isn't for a child to read it and that be the end of it, but for there to be a discussion after. This topic can be difficult to talk about with children, but through this book, I intend to make the conversation flow easier. Some questions to ask children in order to further the discussion and create deeper thinking about the meaning behind the story could be, "What do you think the moral of the story is?" "Have you ever felt the way Travis did?" "What is something that is different and unique about you?" "Why do you think differences are an important?" and "How do you think you can use what is unique about you to help someone else?"

Beyond having specific and planned out follow up questions, some great additional topics of discussion could be found in some of the hidden points within the story. Through the illustrations you can see that some of the boys in the story are wearing pink clothing and have pink hair, while some of the girls in the story are pictured wearing blue clothes and with blue hair. Boys are interested in crafts and playing with dolls while girls are participating in basketball and video games. These small details are intentional in crushing gender stereotypes at a young age for future readers.

Another great conversation to have with the children after asking the question "Why do you think differences are important?" and hearing their answers would be to give your own answer. The teacher or parent can talk about how when a group of people who are different comes together to help each other and work together, people can learn new knowledge and skills, and help others who maybe don't have the same background, skill set, or interests. The teacher or parent creates an example of math in a classroom setting. The teacher or parent could say that

a math worksheet is assigned to be done in groups. The students who really like math and excel in it all work together in a group, and the students who aren't the biggest fans of math and are still learning work together. Those students who are still learning could really benefit from working together with some of the students who like math. Even though those two groups of students have differences in interests, if everyone worked together and helped each other, it would make things much easier and fun.

At the end of a great discussion on why differences are so spectacular and make the world a better place and make individuals unique and special, the teacher or parent could then talk about how at the end of the day, differences make people similar; because everyone is different from each other in some way, that actually makes everyone alike. The teacher, to take it one more step forward to round out the conversation, could ask the children to point out some similarities that they can see or have noticed between themselves and their classmates and explain how similarities are also a great thing because they help us connect with each other and learn more about ourselves and the things that we like to do.

After the book has been read and the discussion has taken place between students and teacher or children and parents, I hope that the importance of diversity and respecting and loving others around them for it has slipped into their brains in one form or another. I hope that for the children who felt as though they have been in Travis' situation before that they feel more confident in themselves and learn to love themselves and those around them, and for those students who felt they had been in the situation of Travis' new classmates, that those children would have a new understanding and respect for those that are different than them. I feel that this book can make a difference in the lives of children and in a generation that is growing up in a very culturally diverse society. I think that through Travis' story and through the teacher

student/parent child discussion we can inconspicuously begin to influence a generation of children into making it a habit and a natural thing to see difference as beautiful and something to be celebrated.

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